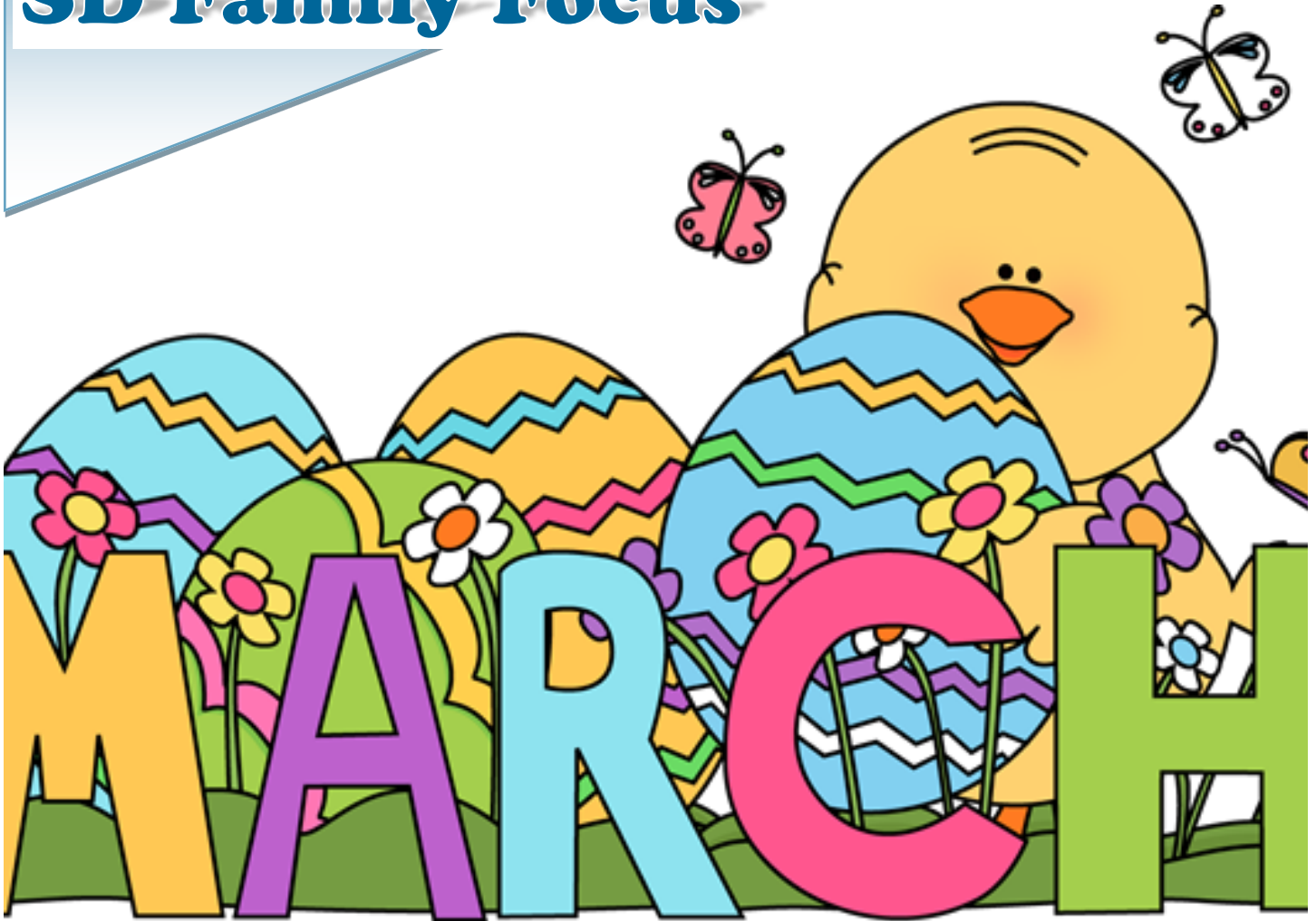


SD Family Focus



Every Member Counts
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD

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Disclaimer: The announcements that appear on this page(s) or attached are intended to inform Soldiers, Airmen, veterans, and their families of special offers provided to Service Members, veterans and their families and are not intended to constitute an endorsement by the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard, the United States Army, the United States Air Force, or the Department of Defense. It is strictly intended to be used for informational purposes only.

Training Opportunities

Military Funeral Honors Course
Two Phase 18 - 20 March and 8 - 10 April 2016.
Students must attend both phases for credit and certification.
Sioux Falls, SD



Resilience Training Assistant Course
4 - 8 April 2016
Rapid City

For more information on either course, please contact MSG Mary Mallow, 605-737-6945.

Chaplain Focus:

"Easter Traditions for Those in the Military"

I came across a terrific article on www.spousebuzz.com by Amy Bushatz entitled "Traditions Meet Military Life: Easter." For many Easter is a holiday steeped in traditions, whether an Easter-egg hunt or attending Easter sun-rise services. But as Miss Bushatz writes, establishing traditions in the military can be tricky when you don't spend year after year in the same place—or even with your spouse. The 155th, 196th and 114th all have loved ones deployed, making it pretty hard to do an egg hunt together! So to make sure your military family has some Easter traditions if you're not all together, here are some ideas:

- 1) Attend Religious Services anyway. Will it be as fun? Probably not! But still go and gain strength from God and from other people.
- 2) Take part in Community activities if you can't in Family activities. Whether your family lives far away or there's strained relationships, there are enough community activities out there for you to have fun. If there are none, start one!
- 3) Consider enjoying Easter at a different date! Who says you have to celebrate Easter on Easter Sunday? Maybe you want an egg-hunt when your loved one gets home. Traditions are great, but traditions should always be flexible enough to meet the needs of the individual or family.
- 4) Keep pack-and-go traditions. Quoting Miss Bushatz: "Family traditions don't have to be tied to a location. Family egg dyeing, Easter dinner, a reading of the Easter story & the filling of Easter baskets are all things that go where you are. So enjoy the change of scenery & don't let that PCS keep you down."
- 5) Try a free Strong Bonds activity for families or singles. 19-20 MAR16 our Chaplain Corp has a Strong Bonds for Families at the Sioux Falls Best Western Ramkota, ages 3 & up. 30 APR16 there's a Strong Bonds mountain biking for Singles in the Black Hills. These are great times that might help you establish new traditions. Let myself or Chaplain Assistant Staufer (regina.e.staufer.mil@mail.mil) know if you'd like to attend. And may God bless our Soldiers, Airmen & Families of the South Dakota National Guard!

Respectfully;

Chaplain Lynn Wilson
Full-time Support Chaplain
737.6009 O/431.5182 C
lynn.j.wilson.mil@mail.mil

**Military OneSource****1-800-342-9647**

Free Tax Services Available Through Military OneSource

Why pay for tax preparation and filing software when you don't have to? Managing your finances or getting help filing your taxes doesn't cost you a dime through Military OneSource. Military OneSource provides free tax preparation and filing services and tax consultations.

Military OneSource tax preparation and filing services

Military OneSource tax preparation and filing software walks you through a series of questions to help you complete your tax return. This self-paced tax software allows you to:

Complete and electronically file your federal and up to three state tax forms

Check your electronic filing status

Rest easy knowing the tax software vendor is by your side if you get audited

Get 100 percent accurate calculations or the tax software vendor will reimburse you up to \$10,000.

Terms and conditions apply.

This online software product is easy to use, and free technical assistance is available if you need it. For technical assistance, such as login issues, using the software, printing returns, etc., call 855-897-8639 and follow the prompts. If you have any personal tax-related questions, call 800-342-9647 to speak with a Military OneSource tax consultant.

Remember, these consultations are free.

Military OneSource tax consultations

Military OneSource provides assistance in making informed decisions about your tax situation. This assistance includes:

Sharing information on tax requirements and other military-related issues

Identifying tax regulations

Providing printed and electronic tax forms and helping you understand how to complete them

Reviewing your options for using a refund

Explaining additional tax services available

Helping you access the Military OneSource free tax preparation and filing software

**Military OneSource****1-800-342-9647****Accessing Military OneSource tax services**

If you reside in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, United States Virgin Islands, Guam or Saipan call 800-342-9647 to speak to a trained tax consultant. To receive tax services in Spanish, call 800-342-9647, and a third-party translator will facilitate the call. If you're hearing impaired and

require a telecommunications device, call 866-607-6794. All services are free to eligible service members and their families. More information about Military OneSource tax preparation and filing service

You don't have to complete your return all at once. By using the self-paced tax preparation software, you can create a secure user identification and password to save, close and return to your filing later.

You can file an amended return if you filed electronically. If you need to make changes after the Internal Revenue Service has accepted your return, you can file a Form 1040X to make changes. Use the tool available through the Military OneSource software. To prepare an amended return, click File an Amended Return under Tax Filing Resources on the Overview screen.

You can now include charitable deductions, mortgage interest and rental property in your tax return.

You can transfer your tax information from last year when preparing this year's tax return. The Military OneSource-provided online tax preparation and filing software allows you to access last year's information free even if you didn't use the service last year.

You may be able to file your federal and state tax returns at the same time. Hawaii and Arkansas require residents to file their federal and state returns at the same time, while all other states allow filing both tax returns together or separately.

You can get the status of your return within 72 hours. However, it can take up to an additional 48 hours before the program updates the status. Once you've filed your return, you can check its status by logging in to your online account.

You can use compatible browsers. Browsers include Google Chrome version 16 and above, Internet Explorer 8 and above, Mozilla Firefox version 11 and above, and Safari version 5 and above.

Your information will never be sold for marketing purposes.

The system protects the security and confidentiality of personal information by using industry-recognized security safeguards. These safeguards include firewalls coupled with carefully developed security procedures to protect your information from loss, misuse or unauthorized alteration.

Free tax services are available to those eligible. If you receive a request for payment, you should immediately call 855-897-8639 or the Military OneSource Call Center at 800-342-9647. There should be no charge for these services.

VETERANS CORNER

During the next couple of months, I am going to give you some ideas on how to create a "Love Me" book of all the life experiences that you or your loved ones have accomplished. The value of the "Love Me" book is that it is a way that you can collect all of these accomplishments and events to create a job resume, an effective interview tool, or a historical record for your family. I hear many times that family members would like to know what a Veteran experienced during their time of service, but did not ask and now it is too late for those conversations. This book is a method of telling your unique and important story.

One resource to visit is the: Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET), DD Form 2586. Your military service has given you valuable training and experience that can improve your chance of getting a good job or achieving your educational goals. As a Service member, you have had numerous training and job experiences, perhaps too many to easily recall and include on job or college application. Fortunately, the military has made life a little easier in this regard. The DD2586, Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET), is created from the Service member's automated records on file. It lists military job experience and training history, recommended college credit information and civilian equivalent job titles. This document is designed to help you apply for jobs, but it is not a resume.

You can obtain a copy of your VMET document online. You will need your CAC (Common Access Card), a DS Logon – Level 2, or your DFAS my Pay pin number to download your document. While at the site be sure you also print a copy of VMET Frequently Asked Questions. Once you have your VMET document, you should review it to ensure it is accurate. Then identify the experience and training you believe will help you to convince employers that you're the right person for the job. Because of the personal information they contain, DMDC cannot release VMET documents directly to a third party, such as a school, etc.

To access your VMET records go to the following website:
<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/tgps/>

Bill Meirose, Ed. D
Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA)
South Dakota National Guard
2823 West Main Street
Rapid City, SD 57702
Office- 605-737-6669
Cell - 605-490-1246



SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
Service Member & Family Support

2823 West Main St
Rapid City SD 57702

Every Member Counts
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD

Mission: The mission of our program is to promote healthy Military Families who are self-reliant during both deployment and non-deployment. We do this through education, outreach services and partnerships with community organizations.

Family Assistance
Phone: 1-800-658-3930



"Like" us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/sdfamilyassistance



Employment Training Opportunity

Are you a service member or family member with Transportation or Logistics experience? Corporate America Supports You (CASY) has a program "Troops to Transportation and Logistics (T2TL)" that can open the way for an exciting career. T2TL isn't only about driving a truck but also about the logistics involved in a \$400 trillion global transportation industry that ranges from small local companies to national and international fleet operations. The T2TL program is managed by retired Army COL Sanford (Sandy) Artman. He and his team work with transportation and Supply Chain Industries to assist in placing wounded warriors, returning troops, veterans and their spouses/caregivers through the Military Spouse Corporate Career Network (MSCCN) into an ever growing industry. Regarding SWIFT Transportation, they are headquartered in Phoenix, AZ with Terminals and Schools throughout the US. SWIFT is not only hiring for Drivers but for Corporate Offices and Terminals alike for positions from Analysts, IT, Customer Service, Mechanics, Safety, Scheduling, CDL Instructors and many other opportunities. Other positions open at SWIFT are:

Driver Academy Leader

Driver Academy Supervisor

CDL Driving Instructor

Driver Training

For more information on the T2TL program, go to: http://casy.msccn.org/casy_old/JobSeekers/T2TL.htm or you can email Sandy Artman direct at sartman@casy.us.



Welcome our new Team Member

My name is Jared Thomas. I recently accepted a position as the Family Readiness Support Assistant for the 196th MEB. I grew up in Chamberlain, went to college in Mitchell at Dakota Wesleyan University, where I earned both a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's Degree. I grew up immersed in the Army National Guard, as my father was enlisted in the 200th En Co for most of my childhood. Once I was old enough, I joined the Guard as an enlisted Soldier in the 200th as well. After 3 ½ years I decided to commission through ROTC, and have been an officer in the Army National Guard for 4 years.

I have found that in my trying times, my family is a major strength in my life, and this position gives me an opportunity to help others have the same.

My office is located in the Sioux Falls Armory in room 147. You can reach me at 605-357-2974 or via email at jared.r.thomas8.ctr@mail.mil.



Dollars \$ Cents

By Bonnie Spain, Consumer Credit Counseling of the Black Hills

Finding common ground: 7 ways couples can discuss finances

Q. Before my husband and I got married, we pulled our credit reports and reviewed them. We were open with each other & thought we were prepared to merge our finances. However, since we've been married, sharing our finances has been more challenging than we anticipated. Right now, we are just muddling through when we want to be doing better. Can you help us?

A. Before you were married, each of you had your own way of handling your money. You were both used to earning & spending money without consulting anyone. This doesn't magically change for couples once they get married. It takes a lot of hard work & a willingness to listen to reach a mutual understanding.

It's easy to focus on the big picture of your finances, but if you want to find common ground, you need to talk about the small ones as well. In fact, when you fail to address the small issues, they often become big ones.

Below is a list of seven issues for you to discuss. This discussion can help you clarify how you might want to proceed in the future.

1. Establish general guidelines for how you'll handle bills. Will you put all of your money in one account and pay bills jointly, or will each of you be responsible for paying different expenses? If you decide to do it one way, and it doesn't work well, you can always try something different.
2. Make a plan to ensure you can meet your monthly expenses. Knowing what bills you have isn't enough. You need a mutual understanding so that one person doesn't spend money designated for paying bills.
3. Determine how much money each of you can spend without checking with the other person first. This will vary based on your income & your bills. If your budget is tight, you may need to set the amount low, at \$20 or so. If you have more flexibility with your finances, you may choose to set the amount higher, at \$50 or \$75.
4. Determine how you will deal with a bill that is higher than normal. Where will that money come from?
5. Agree that you will not take on debt without discussing it with each other first. Borrowing money without consulting each other can harm your relationship and create future financial problems.
6. Plan for the future. Develop a savings plan that includes money allotted for emergencies, goals, and retirement.
7. Decide ahead of time how you will spend extra money. Regardless of how much each of you makes, you should each have an equal voice.

Even when you can confidently handle all of these issues, others will crop up. Regardless of your circumstances, open communication and a commitment to work together will be essential to make progress with your family finances—now and long into the future.



March 18, 2016

March 18th the SD Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and the SD National Guard will host a R.E.D. (**Remember Everyone Deployed**) Shirt Friday honoring the service of 155th Engineer Company and their families. We will be hosting more R.E.D. Shirt Friday's honoring the other deployed SD National Guard Units throughout 2016. This initiative asks everyone to wear the color red to let our Service Members know that we have not forgotten them, and that we appreciate their sacrifice for the country.

By wearing red shirts on Fridays it sends a common and unified acknowledgement of our Service Members and families letting them know they are not forgotten and we appreciate their sacrifice to our country. Wearing a red shirt may seem small, but the meaning behind it is significant.

Everyone is encouraged to show their support and participate in this event. We would like to encourage you to ask your employer or child's classroom to participate as well. We have prepared a letter to employers and educators explaining what this event is and suggesting some activities to raise awareness in addition to wearing red. If you are interested in participating or have questions regarding R.E.D. Shirt Friday you can obtain a letter from your Family Readiness Group Leader or by calling our Family Assistance Center at 1-800-658-3930. Please share photos of your business participating to redshirtfriday.southdakota@gmail.com so we can share them on our social media sites.

South Dakota Army National Guard presents ...

STRONG BONDS for Families

19-20 MAR 2016
SOUIX FALLS

Whether you're married or a single parent,

we invite you to join us for a fun-filled, interactive weekend!

*** WEEKEND RETREAT ***

Provided @ no cost:

**Lodging
Meals**

19-20 MARCH 2016

Active Military Families training



TO REGISTER: Email or Call
regina.e.staufer.mil@mail.mil

605- 737-6222

**** Registration Closes 10 March 2016 ****

**** Those attending must be registered in DEERS ****